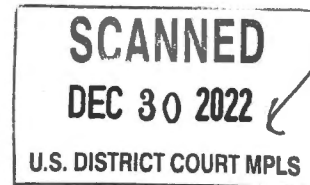


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Porn Copyright Troll Lawyer The Absolute Worst; Bureau Of Prisons Says, 'Hold My Beer'

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It's been a while since we wrote about Prenda Law, a mercifully defunct copyright trolling venture that made its nut by shaking down people for downloading porn videos. The outfit previously known as Steele|Hansmeier PLLP after lawyers John Steele and Paul Hansmeier crossed from seedy trolling to criminal extortion when experts figured out that the firm was making the porn itself and then uploading the material to pirating sites itself and then suing people for downloading the material never intended for sale in the first place.

Pornography? Well, what did you expect when you named someone John Steele? That's like naming a kid "Jeeves" and being shocked he becomes a butler. "John Steele" is involved in porn or a Golden Age comic alter ego and there is no in between.

Anyway, these lawyers cum porn producers ended up in jail, pleading guilty to a bevy of extortion and fraud charges. Paul Hansmeier received a 14 year sentence for his role in the scheme.

It's hard to imagine anyone coming out of this story looking worse, but based on a new filing, the Bureau of Prisons officials holding Hansmeier seem to have a real hard-on for turning him the sympathetic figure.

In a new handwritten amended complaint, Hansmeier details a pattern of retaliation at the hands of prison officials based on his continued litigation over the constitutionality of his conviction. Hansmeier questions whether the government can really convict someone for using undercover methods to enforce copyright. His interpretation of the law would be frigging ludicrous, but he has every right to litigate it out.

His jailers, however, cited him for "use of the mail for an illegal purpose" and "extortion." Hansmeier's complaint indicates that in conversation with officials, they told him they consider it extortion to "demand money from someone on the streets, including in a lawsuit, or in a settlement proposal letter."

Now, it is possible for a settlement proposal letter to amount to extortion. See, e.g., United States v. Hansmeier. But when the lawsuit is against the U.S. Attorney as an official, it's not a shakedown effort.

Hansmeier claims officials subjected him to unique searches and sanctioned him for offenses they'd previously never minded. But then this:

On June 7, 2021, Defendants amped up their retaliation by placing Hansmeier in administrative detention (a/k/a the "Hole"). Under the BOP Inmate Discipline Program, administrative detention is reversed for inmates where specific and objective evidence shows an "inmate's continued presence in the general population poses a serious threat to life, property, self, staff, other inmates, or to the security or the orderly running of the institution." 28 C.F.R. Part 541 Subpart B. Defendants ordered Hansmeier's placement in administrative detention even though they knew that Hansmeier posed no such threat much less a serious threat. Rather, Defendants' motive for detaining Hansmeier was to punish him for his petitioning activity.

Solitary confinement is recognized as torture by the United Nations for a reason it's considered such after 15 days. Hansmeier claims he's been there for 112+ days.

There are temporary justifications for someone physically threatening the rest of the population, but something tells me a pencil-pushing lawyer is not posing a threat to anyone. I'm naturally inclined NOT to trust extortion convicts but "being in administrative detention" is not a controvertible fact and I doubt he's putting that in a filing if it's not easily confirmed. And if he is there then the BoP had better be quick to produce evidence that Hansmeier shivved two guys and runs a prison gang. Anything less and this is Cool Hand Luke nonsense.

Because absent something like that, the fact that administrative detention limits access to legal materials and availability to communicate with attorneys well, res ipsa yadda yadda.

He further claims that the defendants prevented him from accessing the materials to challenge his solitary confinement.

Defendants are in the process of completing a retaliatory transfer of Hansmeier to another BoP institution. On or around June 24, 2021, Defendant Fikes stopped by Hansmeier's administrative detention cell to announce that he was going to transfer Hansmeier to a Bureau of Prisons institution "as far away" as possible in retaliation for Hansmeier's petitioning.

Again, if there's a whiff that this is true absent evidence that Hansmeier is digging an Andy Dufresne tunnel, this is egregious. He's pursuing litigation. He's fully capable of pursuing that same litigation elsewhere. The only difference is another location strips him of any chance to see friends and loved ones since he's currently incarcerated in his home state.

Not to be outdone by Defendant Fikes, Defendant Dawson threatened to transfer Hansmeier to a medium security level institution unless Hansmeier discontinued his petitioning activity.

Again, they had better be prepared to prove that he's throwing cafeteria brawls every day. He's a nonviolent offender! And, yes, the federal system wrongly places many nonviolent offenders in medium security prison, but the fact that the BoP is terrible at its job is not an excuse to continue being terrible at its job.

To be clear, Hansmeier's scum. He threatened people for his own financial interest and made a mockery of the legal process to do it. But there's hardly any excuse to put a nonviolent offender in solitary for a day, and by day 112 those excuses dwindle to zero.

Maybe the prison can produce some evidence that he's an extraordinary physical threat, but based on these allegations it seems like we've finally found someone who makes "porn copyright troll extortionist" look like the good guy by comparison